

Her contributions to the Southern Arizona community and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands are numerous: creating multi-jurisdictional partnerships to conserve riparian areas and desert landscapes; partnering agencies, conservationists, ranchers, business interests, and students; educating scores of birders and other citizens to become active policy-makers and advisors; protecting critical habitats from devastation wrought by mining, development, overgrazing, and other harmful activities; and creating a community more literate in the articulation of social and environmental justice.

Sonja Macys will leave a legacy that cannot be adequately expressed in words, and gives all of us who have known and worked with her hope that we can truly achieve the goals that we set out to accomplish together. The Tucson community and the wildlife of the Sonoran Desert will sorely miss Ms. Macys, but I have no doubt she will go on to accomplish great things in her future endeavors. I wish her the best of luck.

TRIBUTE TO DANNY VALDEZ

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Danny Valdez on his inauguration as Webb County Judge on January 1, 2007.

Judge Valdez was first elected into office as justice of the peace in May 1982 and has served for nearly 25 years. This inauguration marks the start of his sixth 4-year term with the court in Webb County. Judge Valdez has received numerous awards such as the Community Service Award by LULAC Council No. 12, and the Nuestro Orgullo Award by S.C.A.N. due to his passion in working with at-risk youth in the community, and addressing issues such as truancy, gang violence, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and juvenile delinquency. He also was recognized for his commitment to the rule of law by the Laredo Bar Association with the Liberty Bell Award and the 2005 Hispanic of the Year Award by LULAC Council No. 7.

Aside from presiding over one of the busiest courts, Judge Valdez is actively involved in community activities such as working with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Education Program in bringing male and female inmates to local middle and high schools to educate students about the dangers involved in making the wrong choices. He worked with the Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust in the development of the Lamar Bruni Vergara Boys' Scout Camp Huisache and was also instrumental in the development of the Lamar Bruni Inner City Recreation Center. Judge Valdez also reached out to low-income families by chairing the Annual Toys for Tejanitos Drive, the Angel Wish Program, and the Annual Fishing Derby for physically challenged students.

Judge Valdez has given out over \$60,000 in scholarships to promising young students from the Laredo Independent School District. He also started the Supply Our Students Campaign that has raised funds for nearly 70 tons of school supplies for low-income students in Webb County. He is truly one of the great Laredoans and it is because of him that the youth in the community have realized their im-

mense potential in creating a new and better future for themselves by learning from the values of Judge Valdez.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to recognize the dedication of Judge Danny Valdez to his community.

FREEDOM FOR RAYMUNDO PERDIGÓN BRITO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Raymundo Perdigón Brito, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Perdigón Brito is an independent journalist in Cuba who is striving to create a society that tolerates human rights, freedom, and democracy. He has been a peaceful supporter of bringing the most fundamental of human rights to a people shackled by a tyrant's brutal machinery of repression. Unfortunately, because of his unwavering support of freedom for the people of Cuba Mr. Perdigón Brito has been targeted by the dictatorship.

In November of 2006, Mr. Perdigón, his sister Ana Margarita Perdigón and several other journalists launched the Yayabo Press news agency. On November 29, 2006, just 12 days after its launch, Mr. Perdigón Brito was arrested by State Security thugs and told to cease his journalistic activities or that he would be sent to prison. Mr. Perdigón Brito was always aware of the risks he was taking as a journalist and he was well aware of his many colleagues serving long prison terms in Castro's hellish gulags, yet rather than allow his voice to be silenced, he preferred to fight for the cause of freedom and democracy on that enslaved island.

On December 5, 2006, Mr. Perdigón Brito was "sentenced" to 4 years in the inhuman squalor of Castro's gulags on charges that he posed a "pre-criminal danger to society". A charge often used to detain pro-democracy activists, even when they have committed no offense, simply because the regime regards them a potential threat to its grotesquely brutal and repressive totalitarian control.

In Mr. Perdigón's absence, his sister, Ana Margarita Perdigón, replaced him as Editor of Yayabo Press. This development did not pass unchecked or unnoticed within the inner circles of the regime's henchmen. According to a dissident journalist who spoke to Reporters Without Borders, "The political police knew this and did everything to ensure the news agency is disbanded as soon as possible".

On the morning of December 5, 2006, as Mr. Perdigón Brito's relatives were leaving the courthouse in the central province of Sancti Spiritus, Cuba, nearly 100 regime thugs attacked them viciously. This barbarous and vile hate crime was carried out with such regimented violence that Mr. Perdigón Brito's father was hospitalized due to serious injuries sustained during the attack.

Madam Speaker, it is repulsive that only 90 miles from our shore, brave souls like that of Mr. Perdigón are locked in dungeons because they too believe in the freedoms we hold sacred to our way of life. My colleagues, let us remember those whose suffer under the totali-

tarian nightmare that is the Castro regime. Let us demand the immediate release of Raymundo Perdigón Brito and every prisoner of conscience in the dungeons of totalitarian despots.

TRIBUTE TO MR. TONY HOUSEMAN

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Tony Houseman for his continued conservation efforts and his dedicated service to the Houston Safari Club. Tony has been a member of the Houston Safari Club for over twenty years and has served as the Club's Convention Chair in 1996 and the President from 1997–1998. He also has been awarded three distinguished awards from the Houston Safari Club with the 1998 Conservation Award, the 2005 Lifetime Service Award, and the 2007 Frank Green Award.

His tireless leadership has had a positive impact in Texas and across our nation. When Tony and Ray Petty were asked by Congressman Jack Fields to help organize and start the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, which I am a proud member, he never hesitated in saying yes. Every year, for ten straight years, they traveled to Washington D.C. to increase the membership and clout of the Caucus and help fight for the rights of the hunter and the hunting community. Now, the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus has one of the highest memberships and continues to advocate the interests of sportsmen.

Tony also has taken a leadership role in too many projects to list, with notable ones being Operation Bright Lights and the Tony Houseman State Park and Wildlife Management Area. Operation Bright Lights raises funds and works with professional hunters to build schools and water wells in Tanzania, and recently he and his wife Gisela took a trip there and visited one of the newly built schools. For the state park, Tony donated 1,500 acres to conserve the Blue Elbow Swamp in South East Texas. This 3,300 acre conservation site on the Sabine River remains a magical place for wildlife.

Madam Speaker, Tony Houseman is the consummate hunter and conservationist and a friend I deeply admire. Thank you for helping me honor him today.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5, a bill that would expand educational opportunity for millions of young Americans by slicing interest rates on federally-subsidized student loans in half.

This fair, well-balanced legislation would open the doors to America's colleges and universities for millions of our sons and daughters who would have otherwise been dissuaded by